

Harper's, Jan. 1943

JAPAN'S NIGHTMARE

A Reminder to Our High Command

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A MORBID fear hangs over Japan. It has haunted the cities of the island empire for years. It has reached the proportions of a national psychosis. It accounts for many of her military-naval moves and some of her international political policies. Japan fears air raids.

And Japan has reason to fear them. They may mean the difference between a long, grueling war in the Pacific, costly in blood, money, and material, and a much shorter conflict. They may mean the difference between a stalemate that would leave the Japanese in possession of their vast conquests and a smashing United Nations victory. The Japanese leaders know this. We in the democracies must understand it too.

As Messrs. McNichols and Carus indicated in the June *Harper's*, Japan's congested paper-and-plyboard cities are more vulnerable to bombing than the cities of any other major military power in the world, and Japan's essential industrial production is concentrated in a very few of them—all of which lie fairly close together. Bombing these population centers is the simplest way to strike at Japan's civilian morale and cripple

her vital industry and communications.

Wherever I went during my visit to Tokyo in 1941—at the theater, at dinner, at meetings—there was one man who always seemed to be at my elbow. His name was Kiyoshi Kanai. We were introduced by Matsumoto, chief of the official news agency, soon after my arrival. The Domei head introduced him as a “former director of the Central China Development Company.” Kanai said he was “just a business man”; he did not know much about international politics. “But it is always a pleasure to meet Americans, especially Americans interested in the history and culture of Japan.”

I wondered what ax Kanai was grinding. But I knew that if I showed I did not like his company, or if I appeared to be suspicious of him, I should only have someone else on my trail. So I put up with him and tried to appear as naïve as possible. Through Kanai's good offices I met an interesting assortment of Japanese. In every conversation questions about America would come up. Gradually the talk would lead to our aviation program. My hosts always asked about the strikes in America. It was all done in an oblique, offhand way of course.

They were only showing a polite conversational interest in their American guest's homeland. They always inquired about the attitude of American isolationists. What about "America First"? Did I know Lindbergh? Had I met Senator Wheeler? If war were to come between America and Japan would it be just a naval conflict?

On one occasion I ventured to predict that if war came we would bomb Japan's cities. The Japanese are adept at hiding their emotions, but poker-faced Kanai fell into a worried silence. The others coughed, laughed mirthlessly, or shrugged their shoulders. A bullet-headed colonel from the General Staff boasted that only eighteen years earlier Tokyo had been practically wiped out of existence by an earthquake and the fires that followed. What could American planes do, he demanded, to surpass the destructive effects of an earthquake? I replied that we could hardly hope to do more than that. The civilians present laughed nervously. The atmosphere was awkward and uncomfortable.

In Hong Kong a few weeks later I had occasion to compare notes about Japan with United Nations intelligence officers. Yes, they knew about "Tiger" Kanai. He was no "business man." His "Central China Development Company" was a front. True, such an outfit had been set up in 1938 to further the looting of China. But Kanai was an intelligence officer. During the Japanese invasion of Shanghai he had been a notorious undercover man. He was one of Japan's ace operatives.

So "Tiger" Kanai had shadowed me? The Japanese must have wanted something very special, said the men in Hong Kong. What had he said to me? What had he asked me?

Fortunately I was able to quote a good many things he had said and repeat many of his questions. We made a chart of them. The chart showed a zigzag course. But the main trend was toward an outline of America's war psychology and her aviation program.

Now there was little I could have given the Japanese in the way of aviation information, even if I had been gullible enough to pass it on. They knew far more about America's aviation program than I did. Their spies reported the United States national defense preparations pretty thoroughly. According to the United Nations intelligence men, Kanai was trying to learn America's attitude toward the bombing of Japanese cities. I might be of some use in analyzing United States opinion for him. The Japanese war leaders could not be sure that even their best secret service agents would interpret American psychology correctly. And the answer to the question about bombing Japanese cities was of enormous consequence to the men who were preparing to plunge their country into war against the democratic nations.

One of Kanai's questions stands out in my mind: would American isolationists—journalists and politicians—be able to prevent us from attacking Japan's "civilian population" and "centers of ancient culture"? He meant Japan's flimsy wood-and-paper cities. I told him emphatically, "No!" On this issue there would be no isolationists. He did not enjoy my emphasis. Hard-bitten Japanese intelligence officer that he was, Kanai could not completely conceal his uneasiness. He protested that it would be "inhuman" to bomb "helpless people" and "destroy religious shrines and invaluable works of art."

II

"TIGER" Kanai's fear of American air power is shared by all Japanese officials. Over ten years ago they instituted air-raid drills. The Japanese public has an inborn dread of fire. There have been instances where a whole town has gone up in smoke. Blackouts and air-raid practices have long formed a routine part of life in Japan's overcrowded combustible cities. The yellow smoke screening a residential quarter, young women office workers in a bucket

line, school men and streets—the Pearl Harbor danger of served to that hung

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line, school children in gas masks, firemen and police dashing through the streets—these were common sights in pre-Pearl Harbor Japan. Reminders of the danger of attack from the skies, they served to heighten the air of foreboding that hung over the country.

Some of the most important moves in Japan's war strategy since December 7, 1941, have been influenced, if not dominated, by apprehension of bombing assaults on cities like Tokyo, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe. And with good reason. A nation's ability to make war depends on its industries, rail lines, and ocean shipping facilities. Interfere seriously with Japan's supplies to her overseas forces in China, the Philippines, Malaya, Burma, the Dutch East Indies, New Guinea, and the Solomons, and you have isolated these armies and multiplied their chances of defeat. The Japanese General Staff understands this and has acted to prevent such a development.

At the Peace Conference after the First World War Japan laid claim to the former German colonies in the Pacific. Only a few voices were raised against Tokyo's demands. Prime Minister Hughes of Australia recognized the folly of turning over strategically important islands to the Asiatic imperialists. He fought against it at the Peace Conference. But he was only partially successful. Japan had the Marianas, Carolines, and Marshalls mandated to her. Without delay she set to work building fortifications, air and naval stations on the mandated territory. Yap, Pelew, Truk, Ponape, Jaluit, Wotje, and about three thousand other Japanese-held islands came to form a powerful fifteen-hundred-mile-wide barrier of overseas bases, called *Nanyo* by the Japanese.

In Canberra, a few weeks before Pearl Harbor, Mr. Hughes spoke to me indignantly of the blindness of the British and American Peace Conference delegates who had let Japan get these islands. "They have turned them into stationary aircraft carriers," he charged. "We let the Japanese double the power of their

navy when they took the Marshalls, Marianas, and Carolines. Some day we'll pay a terrific price for that criminal stupidity!"

Since Pearl Harbor Japan's conquests of Guam, Wake, the Philippines, Singapore, and the Netherlands East Indies have served further to buffer Japan not only against naval but also against air attack. Japan's speed in rushing her conquests was at least partly dictated by a desperate desire to zone off United Nations air threats to her matchbox industrial centers.

Fear of bombing is one of Japan's motives in driving deeper into China. After the Doolittle raid last April the Japanese made frantic efforts to occupy Chinese territory south of Shanghai that might be used as air bases for American bombers. Japanese planes repeatedly bombed airfields at Lishui and Chuhsien in southwestern Chekiang. From Lishui it is only about 1,300 miles to Tokyo, some 700 miles to Japan's great naval base at Sasebo. The Chinese have fought stubbornly to maintain their foothold in Chekiang, for they look forward to the day when United Nations bombers can use this territory for sustained attacks on Japan's principal cities.

Farther north the fear of Russian air strength has laid a restraining hand on Japanese ambitions against Siberia. The non-aggression pact between such inveterate enemies as Tokyo and Moscow is unnatural. The truce will not last an hour longer than serves Japan's purpose. In the meantime the Japanese have tied up on the Manchukuoan border perhaps a million crack Soviet troops that Stalin has needed badly to defend the Ukraine and the Caucasus. But Japan has delayed the inevitable conflict with the Soviet Union because her own air power has been largely scattered throughout the south Pacific. Moreover, Russian industrial and military targets are fairly well spread out, not concentrated like those in Japan. Most important of all, the moment the Japanese army invaded Siberia, that territory could be thrown

open to American bombers, which could get there via Alaska and Kamchatka. It is less than 700 air miles from Vladivostok to Tokyo.

When Japan joined the Axis Hitler sent hundreds of aviation officers and technicians to Japan. They operated under the orders of Colonel Kretschmer, the German military attaché in Tokyo. At the Imperial Hotel about half of the occupants of the third floor, where I lived, were Germans. They had come to Japan to speed up the eastern Axis partner's aviation program. But their contribution had its limitations. No Axis expert—German or Japanese—has been able to work out an effective defense of Japan's inflammable cities against air attack.

III

IN OUR campaign against Japan we have two main courses to choose from. One is the military-naval-air drive to work back island to island through Japan's overseas outposts. The action in the Solomons has shown us the difficulties which would be involved in this hand-over-hand method. Island-hopping certainly will be costly in blood and money.

The other plan is first to strike paralyzing and demoralizing blows at the Japanese centers of production and population: to attack Japan's industrial heart and the jugular vein of her land and water communications system. This must be done by aerial bombing. True, it will mean the loss of many planes. But it promises to cut down the length of the combat by establishing the "internal blockade" of which Japan's leaders are afraid. Once that is accomplished, the island-to-island advance of our military and naval forces will face less formidable odds.

It seems brutal to be talking about burning homes. But we are engaged in a life-and-death struggle for national survival, and we are therefore justified in taking any action that will save the lives of American soldiers and sailors. We

must strike hard with everything we have at the spot where it will do the most damage to the enemy.

At Hong Kong in July, 1941, I had lunch with some Chinese officers. "When war comes and you attack the Japanese cities," warned one of them, "don't make the mistake of loading your planes with heavy demolition bombs. You would only blow holes in the ground. Load your Flying Fortresses with small incendiary bombs. Scatter thousands of them over Tokyo, Osaka, and Kobe. Burn those cities up. That's the way to shorten the war!" His colleagues nodded agreement.

Taking the war to the Japanese homeland would have a dynamic political effect on the other peoples of Asia. The Free Chinese, the Filipinos, the Indians would be encouraged to continue their resistance to Japan. Realistic Chiang Kai-shek values Flying Fortresses over Tokyo and Osaka more than any number of academic statements about racial equality. Every American incendiary air raid would be a stimulus to Japan's foes, all the more so because "face" counts mightily in Asia.

An occasional air blitz will not accomplish our purpose. We must have powerful sustained raids supplemented by small attacks that will confuse the Japanese defenders, scatter their fighter planes, lower the morale of the war workers, and force Japan to keep an increasing number of planes and aviators in the homeland. We may gage Japanese fear of bombing raids by the hysterical denunciation of the "inhuman acts" committed by General Doolittle's "enemy beasts" and the threats that future raiders captured will be severely dealt with. Such reaction betrays disproportionate shock and dread.

How can we reach the Japanese cities? Right now our long-range bombers can hit their Japanese targets from Chinese bases. We must get more and more of our bombers into Free China and send in the men, fuel, parts, munitions, and bombs to keep them going. We must

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follow the land-based assaults with raids
from carriers. We may be able to strike
from the Aleutians. But when we start
the bombing we must not let up. We
must keep going.

Once a second front is opened against
Germany not merely in Africa but also
in Europe, we must try to convince the
Russians that it is to their interest to open

a second front against Japan. If that
comes about we can mass heavy bombing
forces in eastern Siberia.

Meanwhile we should use every re-
source of American ingenuity to get
bombers over Japan as soon as possible,
never forgetting for a moment that
through them lies the short cut to victory
in the Pacific.

SAMPLE OF JAPANESE IMPERIAL MYSTICISM — "Mikoto"
is to be interpreted as the soul of God or that of human beings.
Hence, by Sumera Mikoto is meant the major all-unifying life or
spirit, to which multiple minor spirits or lives will turn centripetally;
Sumera Mikuni [Japan] then is the divine land, from which Sumera
Mikoto wishes to undertake his heavenly task of reconstructing one
universal household embracing all mankind. It is the first and fore-
most axiom of the Way of the Gods that without Sumera Mikoto no
nations of the world would have ever come into existence, because he
proves the sole successor to the Progenitress of the whole cosmos—the
Sun Goddess. Inspired by sheer parental love for all beings, Sumera
Mikoto . . . beseeches them to assist him wholeheartedly in the
accomplishment of his divine mission bequeathed by his deified for-
bears. However, should any perverse nation dare obstruct Sumera
Mikoto in the carrying out of his celestial undertaking, he will resort,
though reluctantly, to arms for the purpose of constraining that
nation to come back to the right path and to collaborate with Sumera
Mikuni once more with fidelity. It is just as a mother chastises her
naughty child into obedience so that his conduct may be duly rec-
tified. This noble sentiment is fully manifest in the Imperial
Rescript issued on December 8, 1941, which reads in part: "To
cultivate friendship among nations and to enjoy prosperity in com-
mon with all nations has always been the guiding principle of Our
Empire's foreign policy. It has been truly unavoidable and far from
Our wishes that Our Empire has now been brought to cross swords
with America and Britain." — From a book by Professor Chikao
Fujisawa, published in Tokyo, February, 1942, for mass Japanese consump-
tion, and smuggled out on the Gripsholm by a missionary from Korea.